

social aspect of getting to see the community and friends."

Ms. Lamba, 34, said there are only two other Sikh families in Glen Head, where she has lived for the last 10 years, so she places great value in being able to come to a place where she can be just one of many. Here, the women's colorful tunics and head shawls do not stand out; nor do the men's turbans or the boys' patkas — a head covering gath-

community of being around, really growing in population from 17,523 in 1890 to 34,333 in 2000, according to the 2000 census. Asian Indians, who include Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims and Christians, are now the largest Asian group on Long Island, followed by the Chinese and the Koreans.

These Asian groups have grown enough in recent years to support their own supermarkets, language schools, churches, temples and mosques on Long Island, making the



weekly trips that many families used to make to ethnic enclaves in Queens unnecessary. Many members of these Asian groups say the best restaurants and specialty stores still lie west of Nassau County, and lies to places like Little India in Jackson

not yet been severed. But the Asian communities on Long Island are well on their way toward self-sufficiency.

Many of the island's Asian families first settled in the ethnic enclaves in Queens and, following a time-honored pattern, migrated to Long Island in search of the suburban ideal — a single-family home, a patch of lawn and better public schools.

"When we initially come to settle in this country, most go to the city where they can

the week, everybody is busy," he said. "But on the weekend, we can all come together here as a community."

The largest concentrations of Indians on the island are in Elmont, Hicksville, East Meadow and North New Hyde Park. In the Herricks school district, which has seen a large influx of Indian and Korean families, the Asian population in the high school went from 5.5 percent in 1985 to more than 36

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Michael Ross Wicks for The New York Times

LIPA IS STILL HUNGRY

A guarded outlook for the summer and a plea for aggressive action in coming years. 2

A SAG HARBOR WRITER

Hofstra is marking the centennial of John Steinbeck's birth. 14

Parents' Fear: A Monster in the Playground

By JOAN SWIRSKY

KATHY RICHARDSON, a Carle Place resident, was picking up her 4-year-old son, Danny, from a day care center in Mineola last November when she saw a notice saying the E.P.A. planned to drill next door.

"When I went outside, I noticed drilling equipment in the parking lot next door and I called the Department of Health the next day to ask them if the playground and the drinking water was safe," Ms. Richardson said. "A representative visited the site within days. He told me that the D.O.H. had no record of a day care center even being there. But he immediately arranged for the air to be tested and called the Environmental Protection Agency."

Word quickly spread that the day care center was adjacent to an active Superfund toxic waste site. Now an outraged group of parents wants to find out why they were not notified two years earlier, when the site was placed on the Superfund list.

Ms. Richardson, 37 and divorced, said her son is still going to the day care center "because he has a wonderful male teacher who acts as a role model. And, also, I feel confident that the air is better now and that

the authorities are getting the problem solved."

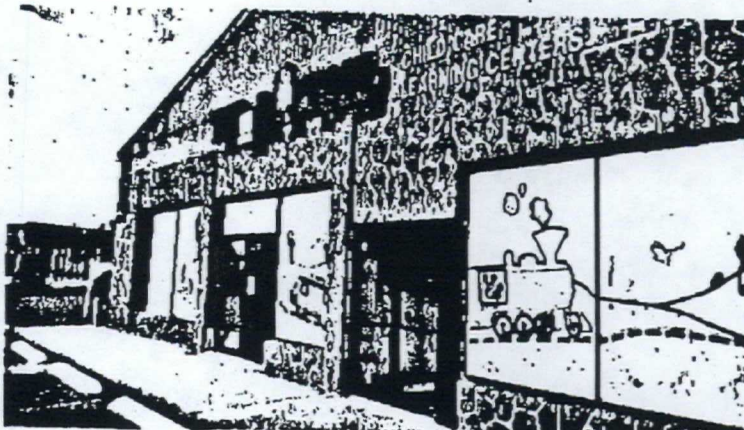
But many other parents have withdrawn their children. "We have lost almost half our enrollment," Libby Barland, vice president for marketing at Tutor Time's corporate headquarters in Boca Raton, Fla., said of the Mineola site. "Presently we have less than 100 children enrolled."

Leslie McCarthy, a Westbury resident who withdrew her 3-year-old son, Kevin, and 17-month-old daughter, Grace, from Tutor Time after the news spread, said she had been told that enrollment was down to 40 from nearly full capacity in September. The school is licensed to serve 212 children.

"My children had constant upper-respiratory conditions when they were at Tutor Time, and Grace ended up twice in the emergency room," said Mrs. McCarthy, 41, an assistant director at the Goddard Institute for Space Studies in Manhattan. She said a group of parents met in February with federal, state and local health officials, "but there's still a lot of anger."

"People lose patience quickly when they don't get the answers they want and need," she said.

Stephanie A. Sokenis, 33, who lives in Hicksville and works in Jericho, said she transferred her 3-year-old son, Michael, to another day care center. "I was incredibly



Paul Marini for The New York Times

ENROLLMENT plunged at Tutor Time, a day care center in Mineola, after parents learned it was next to a toxic waste site. Many want to know why they weren't told sooner.

lived that I never got a call from Tutor Time telling me that they knew about the toxic site," she said.

The Mineola center is located at 80 Herricks Road, next to the site of the former

Jackson Steel Company, which manufactured metal forms from 1977 until 1991. Byproducts of the degreasers used to clean the metals — tetrachloroethylene, perchloro-

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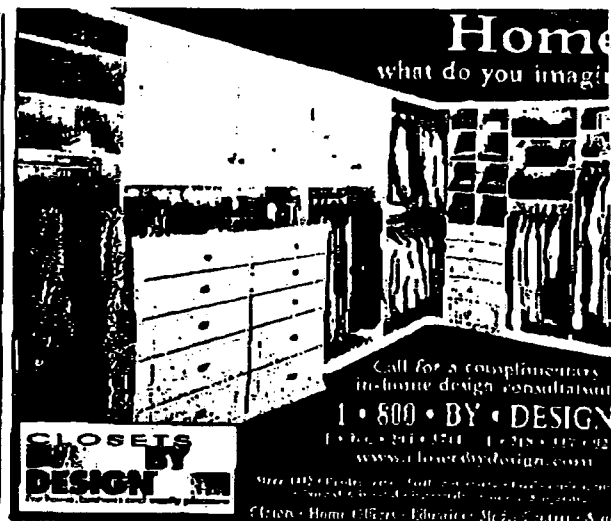


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A hand-drawn map showing the proposed route for the new Interstate 70 bridge over the Mississippi River. The map includes labels for various locations such as St. Louis, Dry Creek Center, Garden City, and several schools and hospitals. A dashed line indicates the proposed bridge alignment.

Cleaning up toxic waste sites "is a slippery slope," Mc Collier said.

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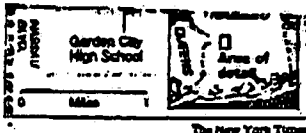
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work in this building," said Stanley J. Sanders, whose law firm, Sanders & Sanders, is next door to Tutor Time. The other immediate neighbors are a pool hall, an electronics store and a restaurant.

Mr. Sanders said the contamination of the Jackson Steel property had long been known. In 1982, he said, Winthrop University Hospital considered buying the site. "But after it conducted major environmental studies and found metal dust and a plume of pollution underneath the Jackson Steel building, they decided not to buy it," he said.

"An abandoned corporation owns the property, and probably \$3 million of accumulated taxes haven't been paid on it for more than 15 years," Mr. Sanders said. "Fleet Bank owns the mortgage, but they won't foreclose because they probably don't want the responsibility of cleaning it up."

(A spokeswoman for Fleet Bank in Boston would neither confirm nor deny that it held a mortgage on the property.)

"The county and the village have known about this for 15 years, and it's a shame they did nothing and didn't assume the responsibility for the cleanup," Mr. Sanders added. "They did nothing. But with their knowledge of Jackson Steel, they should have done more when the day care center moved in."

"I feel deceived by the government agencies that knew about this," Ms. Richardson said. "Until things get hot, they don't seem to talk to each other. Why didn't the agency that gives out licenses for day care centers know this was a Superfund site?"

William C. Van Slyke, a spokesman for the state Office of Children and Family Services, the agency that licenses day care centers outside New York City, said: "We only learned about the Jackson Steel site in December from the state health department and we immediately determined that Tutor Time had been informed of its existence by the E.P.A. the previous March but failed to notify our agency, which they're required to do. So we fined them \$500 in January."

Mr. Cahill confirmed that his agency faxed notice of the site's contamination to Tutor Time in March 2001.

But Ms. Barland said: "We never heard the words Jackson Steel until November, when we were advised to send a note about the site to the families, and we never heard the word Superfund until December. There were no alarm bells."

"We've been in touch with all the agencies on a continual basis to make sure the environment was safe and there was no threat to any child," Ms. Barland continued. "The E.P.A. has not recommended closing

sluggish process," Ms. Seitzer said, adding that the E.P.A. posted a notice at Tutor Time informing the parents of the problem in November. But except for Ms. Richardson, no parent seems to have seen it.

"When a child has pink eye, every parent gets an individual note from the school," said Bernadette Carr, a resident of Garden City whose 3-year-old daughter, Charlotte, attended Tutor Time. "But when your child is in a toxic environment, there is no personal note, only an alleged notice that they were asked to produce at a parent-teacher meeting in January but couldn't."

In a show of hands, every parent at a meeting of Tutor Time parents Monday night at Winthrop University Hospital indicated that they had not seen the notice.

Mrs. Carr, 33, a paralegal with the non-profit Family and Children's Association in Hempstead, said that her daughter had hives and breathing problems until she removed her from the school in January. "Then they vanished and never came back," she said.

"I'm worried about the long-term effects of these poisons on my child and other children," she added. "The government agencies and the school were either lax or they didn't want to give us information. Our country keeps talking about putting kids first and it takes a village, but this is not the case. Concern for our kids was

Parents question who knew about the toxic site and when.

not their top priority."

Kieran Crowley, a New York Post reporter who lives in Bellmore, removed his daughter from the school but has demanded that the state test all the children for liver and kidney function.

"There is no science on these levels of exposure in children," he said. "That's the least the state could do after it concealed so much evidence about this site for years."

Ms. Seitzer said: "Parents have every reason in the world to feel concerned and to want information. We've ordered Tutor Time to clean up their environment and we're overseeing the process."

That is not good enough for Rep. Carolyn McCarthy of Minicola. Leslie McCarthy's mother-in-law.

"I've been working on getting answers to this from the E.P.A. and other agencies, nearly daily, for a year," the congresswoman said, "and I feel we're getting stonewalled. Now, they're all of a sudden talking about removing the toxins, but they've been raising red flags by not being more forthcoming."



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